

# ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON CHURCH



Father Mark Seiker  
3301 Echo Drive  
North Platte, Nebraska 69101

Rectory / Office [308-534-5461](tel:308-534-5461)  
Parish Hall: 534-0511

Parish email: [rectory-office@seas-np.org](mailto:rectory-office@seas-np.org)  
Webpage: <http://www.seas-np.org>

## ***20<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time*** ***August 19, 2018***

***Welcome to St. Elizabeth's:*** It is our hope that you feel at home and among friends here at St. Elizabeth. If you are a visitor for a day, we pray God's speed on your journey. If you are looking for a parish community, we would be delighted to welcome you into our parish family. Please introduce yourselves. Registration forms are available in the entry racks or contact us anytime at 308-534-5461.

### **Religious Services**

#### **Mass Schedule** For Sunday Obligation:

Saturday 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday 10:00 a.m.

#### **Weekdays & Holy Days**

As published in the Bulletin.

#### **Rosary**

Prayed **8:30 a.m.** Monday mornings, and  
30 minutes before weekend Mass.

#### **Sacrament of Confession**

Offered 30 minutes before most all daily Masses  
Saturday 4:00 p.m. – 4:55 p.m.  
Sunday, 9:00 a.m. – 9:55 a.m., or by appointment.

#### **Sacrament of Baptism**

Parents are asked to attend a baptism preparation class. This is recommended, and easiest to do before the birth of the child, but must be done before the baptism.

#### **Sacrament of Matrimony**

To assist those who plan to marry, all couples will be required to fulfill the diocesan marriage preparation policy, which includes the FOCCUS & Engaged Encounter Programs. This requires a minimum of 4-6 months. The assessment process must be completed before a wedding date is set. Contact pastor early to begin the preparation.

### **Parish Information**

#### **Bulletin Deadline**

All material is to be submitted to the parish office before noon Wednesday prior to the Sunday it is to appear. Email to: [rectory-office@seas-np.org](mailto:rectory-office@seas-np.org)

#### **New or Moving Parishioners**

Please call the office to arrange an appointment with the Pastor to register in the Parish. Please call the office to notify us of any address change.

#### **Your Will**

Ask your attorney to include remembrance of your Church in your will.

#### **Religious Vocations**

Any young woman interested in religious life, or young man interested in a vocation to the priesthood should contact your pastor. Please pray for vocations!

### **Education**

#### **C.C.D. Programs**

Sunday mornings (Sept-May) 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

#### **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (R.C.I.A.)**

For those interested in possibly joining the Catholic Church. Usually on Wednesdays (Sept-May), 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. in Parish Hall. Please contact the parish office for more information.

## SCHEDULE OF MASSES

Monday	Aug. 20	<b>5:30 p.m.</b>
Tuesday	Aug. 21	<b>7:00 a.m.</b>
Wednesday	Aug. 22	<b>5:30 p.m.</b>
Thursday	Aug. 23	8:00 a.m.
Friday	Aug. 24	<b>8:00 a.m.</b>
Saturday	Aug. 25	5:00 p.m.
Sunday	Aug. 26	<b>10:00 a.m.</b>

## INTENTIONS

For our Benefactors  
 Book of Memories / Blessings  
 Bernie Pieper +  
 Luke Ranck +  
 Charlotte Connelly (-bd)  
 People of our Parish  
 Diane Gregg

*Unless you eat the flesh  
 of the Son of Man  
 and drink his blood,  
 you do not have life  
 within you. — John 6:53*

## **Stewardship: August 12, 2018**

**Adult Envelopes:** .....\$1,345.00  
**Loose Plate:**.....\$339.65  
**Children:**.....\$9.05  
**Holy Day (Assumption):**       \$33.00  
**Total:** ..... \$1,726.70

### Joy of the Gospel Campaign

Total Pledged: .....\$958,770.00  
 Gifts last week: .....\$0.00  
Total Gifts Received:.....\$697,503.05  
 Original DIAL Loan:.....1,485,000.00  
 Total Received (CTTF Camp): \$1,025,440.07  
 Misc Donations Received:.....\$739,940.31  
 Total Payments on Loan:.....\$1,513,860.04  
 Balance on DIAL LOAN:..... **\$238,638.28**

## **Parish Calendar**

Sunday Aug. 19 11:00am **CCD CLASSES**  
 11:30am Pumpkin Festival Committee meeting.  
 Sunday Aug. 26 11:00am **CCD CLASSES** (12:00pm Installation of Fr. Kimminau, Pastor of Curtis)

## **Catholic School News:**

**Little Leprechaun Preschool** - 4 & 5 year old class will begin on Monday, August 20<sup>th</sup> with Picture Day on Wednesday, August 22<sup>nd</sup>. The first day of school for 3 & 4 year olds on August 21<sup>st</sup>, which also marks Picture Day.

**McDaid Picture Day** - will be August 21<sup>st</sup>! St. Patrick's HS Photo Day is Thursday August 23<sup>rd</sup>. \*Picture Forms have gone home with students please be sure you have received yours. Place your orders and get it returned prior to Photo Day!

**Up with People** - is returning to North Platte on September 3-10 2018! We are excited to bring Cast B 2018 back to North Platte for performances and educational opportunities for local students. We have been bringing Up with People to your community since the early 1980s and are thrilled to perform our newest production for you at the Fox Theatre. The performance will be benefiting three non-profits in the efforts to keeping the arts in the community and schools. The organizations are: Fox Theatre, North Platte Public Schools Foundation and North Platte Catholic Schools Endowment-Trust.

\*NPCS students will be invited to attend one of the Up With People productions, and students will also be involved in special events with Up With People cast members.

\*The North Platte Catholic Schools have been asked to provide some HOST FAMILY housing for the Up With People cast members during their stay in our community. Hosting these international cast members would be a fun and educational experience for your family!! Would you please consider opening your home? We ask that host families provide:- A place to sleep - Breakfast - Dinner - Limited transportation.

If you or someone you know may be interested in hosting an international participant please reach out to Carlos Vazquez cvazquez@upwithpeople.org 308.349.1327. Thanks so much for your previous hospitality, please let us know if you are willing to host!

**The Good News at NPCCS!! We welcome several new teachers to our Staff at NPCCS** - Mrs. Alissa Blake-HS English, Mrs. Moriah Eickoff-HS Counselor, Mr. Rick Elsasser-HS History, Deacon Michael Davis-MS-HS Theology, Mrs. Amy Smith - Resource, Mr. Brendan Lynes - McDaid PE, Mrs. Haley Wurst - Preschool, Mrs. Hallsted - Preschool Aide, Mrs. Shalea Collins-Kindergarten Para.

### **North Platte Catholic School:**

**Faith and Knowledge for a Brighter Future**

**CCD CLASSES** ... for 2018-2019 for both the **Grade School (Gr K-8) & High School (Gr 9-12)** will be held on **Sunday after Mass from 11:00am-12:15pm**. The **first class is (TODAY) Sunday, August 19, 2018 at 11:00am**.

## **Women's Resource Center 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Fundraising Banquet** ...

Guest speaker: Claire Culwell. (Claire survived her birth mother's abortion that took the life of her twin) **Thursday, September 20, 2018** at 6:30pm at Quality Inn & Suites, 2102 S Jeffers. Adults only, limited seating; Business attire.

**PRAY** - For underwriters to fund expenses; For volunteers to be table hosts; For banquet planning team; For Claire's preparation to speak

**SERVE** - Be a member of the Event Planning Team

**DONATE** - Become an underwriter

**HOST** - Be a Table Host - fill a table of eight

**ATTEND** - Mark your calendar and plan to attend!

**Meal for New Parents** ... Maggie & Andy Butler (new parishioners) just had their newborn, Graham, baptized 08/11/18. A meal schedule has been established for them online via TakeThemAMeal.com. If you would like to make a dinner for them to bless them on the birth of Graham, you can sign up online at the site (search last name: Butler; password: 0815), via link St Es FB page, or call Emily Krondak 520-6673.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Sacred Music Clinic** ... The Diocesan Liturgical Commission will be hosting the Third Annual Sacred Music Clinic on **Saturday, August 25, 2018** at the **Newman Center in Lincoln**.

This year all presentations will be given by local priests / musicians. Parish musicians, cantors, & choir members, as well as interested Parishioners are invited to participate: please mark your calendars.

**Spiritual Bouquet for Bishop Conley** ... St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Daughters of Charity would like to gather and assemble a Spiritual Bouquet to be presented to Bishop Conley. In this time of strife it seems very appropriate to offer gifts of prayer, penance and devotion to Jesus who, suffering alongside us, will reveal Himself and guide us along the path to renewal, reconciliation and healing. Please join us in this important and prayerful effort. Signup sheets are available in the Narthex this weekend and next weekend. Please consider giving generously of your prayers & devotions.

**Put a Retreat into Your Schedule ...** In an effort to remove some obstacles that might be keeping parishioners from enjoying a retreat, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church will be making a donation of \$1,500.00 to Good Counsel Retreat House. This donation will cover the Registration Fee for 9 parishioners. Car-pooling is also encouraged. If you are interested in attending a particular retreat, perhaps someone else is also interested. Let me know and a note can be put in the bulletin mentioning that there is a vehicle going to Good Counsel Retreat House for a particular Retreat. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton will also pay for the gas to a Retreat. Please put a Retreat into your schedule this year! You can register at [www.goodcounselretreat.com](http://www.goodcounselretreat.com) & receive immediate confirmation or call Good Counsel Retreat House at 402-786-2705 to register now.

**August – June Schedule:**

- Aug 24-26..... Fr. Sean Kilcawley..... Women  
*“Divine Daughterhood/Merciful Motherhood Retreat”*
- Aug. 31 - Sept 3 Fr. Gary Coulter/Fr. Chris Barak Men / Women  
*“3 or 4-Day Directed Ignatian Retreat”*
- Sep 13-16..... Opus Sanctum Angelorum..... Men / Women  
*Work of the Holy Angels (4-Day)*
- Sep 27-30 Fr. Zachary, SOLT/Knights of Holy Eucharist .Men/Women  
*“Love Made Visible; Eucharistic Adoration Retreat”*
- Oct. 6-7..... St. Gianna Physician’s Guild Men / Women  
*“For Catholic Doctors, Nurses, Medical Professionals & Students*
- Oct 19-21 ..... Fr. Andrew Heaslip / Matt Simmons Men/Women  
*“Catechists Retreat for Educators, Teachers, Catechists & Parents”*
- Nov 2-4..... Fr. Craig Doty ..... Men / Women  
*“Jesus, Please Heal Me (Pryaer Teams available)”*
- Nov 16-18..... Fr. Sean Kilcawley..... Men / Women  
*“Learning to Love from the Beloved Disciple”*
- Nov 30–Dec 2 Deacon James Keating Couples (Married/Engaged)  
*“Marriage & Intimacy: How God Wants to Secure Your Love”*
- Dec. 14-16 ..... Bishop Conley & Fr. Coulter .... Men/Women  
*(The Mysteries of Christmas)*
- Jan 11-12 ..... Fr. Lux & Fr. McGuire..... Women  
*(LDCCW Winter Symposium)*
- Jan 18-20 ..... Fr. Eric Clark / Knights of Holy Eucharist ..... Men  
*“Acolyte / Lector Retreat: Discipleship at the Foot of the Cross”*
- Feb 1-3..... Fr. William Holoubek ..... Men / Women  
*“Unbound: Breaking Free from Spiritual Wounds”*
- Feb 15-17..... Sr. Ann Shields..... Men / Women  
*“Faith: More Precious than Gold”*
- Feb 22-24 Fr. Angelus Montgomery, CFR. Men/Women  
*“American Saints and Heroic Virtue”*
- Mar 8-10 ..... Fr. Karl Millis..... Men / Women  
*“St. Teresa of Avila in Light of the Joy of the Gospel”*
- Mar 18-21 ..... Fr. Gary Coulter ..... Men / Women  
*“Silent Directed Ignatian Retreat (Mon-Thur)”*
- Mar 22-24 ..... Fr. Sean Timmerman..... Men / Women  
*“Awareness of Christ: the Rosary and the Eucharist”*
- Mar 29-31 ..... Sharon Doran. .... Men / Women  
*“Scriptural Lenten Retreat on the Boundless Mercy of God”*
- April 18-20 ..... Marian Sisters Young Women *Triduum Retreat*
- May 10-11 ..... Janette Howe ..... 2 Day Retreat for Women  
*“In Quiet and Trust Your Strength Lies”*
- Summer 2019 8 Day Silent Ignatian Retreats... Men / Women  
*July 1-9; July 10-18 Fr. Dennis Brown, OMV*

**“Theology on Tap”** ... for single & married adults in their 20’s & 30’s. Join us **Sunday, August 26** when **Jen Brown** , (with Spirit Catholic Radio – Spirit Mornings Co-Host) joins us. Jen Brown has been a fixture in local radio for more than 20 years, and she joined the Spirit Catholic Radio team in June 2013 as co-host of Spirit Mornings. Start time: 6:30pm-7:00pm social time, with presentation starting promptly at 7:00pm. **Knights of Columbus Hall (515 E 5th St); location change.** Free will donations accepted. Cash bar. Please follow our link on Facebook: Theology on Tap North Platte. If you have questions, call Jennifer Kramer 520-1622.

**Stress in Your Marriage?** ... There is less than a week left to sign up for Retrouvaille. Retrouvaille is a program for married couples that feel bored, frustrated, or angry in their marriage. Some experience coldness and simply shut down. Others experience conflict and arguments in their relationship. Most don't know how to change the situation or even communicate with their spouse about it. This program has helped tens of thousands of couples experiencing marital difficulty at all levels including disillusionment and deep misery. For confidential information about or to register for the August program beginning with a weekend on August 24-26, 2018, call 888-317-5654, 308-986-2351 or [www.HelpOurMarriage.org](http://www.HelpOurMarriage.org).

**St. Patrick’s Annual BBQ** ... will be held on **Saturday & Sunday, August 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018** at 415 N. Chestnut St, North Platte, NE. St. Pat’s is kicking off this year’s event Saturday, August 25<sup>th</sup> 6:30-8:30pm featuring live music with Rascal Martinez (free will donation) and burgers (\$3/meal) by St. Pat’s Knights of Columbus! Bring your lawn chairs. Sunday, August 26<sup>th</sup> 12-3pm. This year on the menu: Sloppy Joe sandwiches with a drink, chips, and a side, **\$5 per plate.** Games and attractions will be available for all ages, including a raffle, cake walk, farmers market, Fun Jumpz, dunk tank, trinkets & treasures, silent auction and much more!! Come join the fun and bring a friend!

**Novena for the Legal Protection of Human Life** ... The Novena is **Friday, Aug. 3, - Friday, Sept. 28.** Please sign up for the Novena as part of the USCCB Call to Prayer at [www.usccb.org/pray](http://www.usccb.org/pray).

**Holy Spirit Youth Group** ... will host Slip N Slide Kick Ball on Wednesday August 29. All Youth grades 9-12 are welcome to join us for Fun, Food and Faith from 6-8pm at Holy Spirit Faith Formation Building. Follow HSNPYG on Facebook and Twitter for more information.

**The Eucharist and the Pro-Life Movement** ... “I am the Bread of Life. He who eats this bread will live forever. I will raise Him up on the last day.” (See Jn.6:47-58) The Eucharistic sacrifice is the very action of Christ by which He destroyed our death and restored our life. Whenever we gather for this sacrifice we are celebrating the victory of life over death, and therefore over abortion. The pro-life movement is not simply working “for” victory; we are working “from” victory. As Pope Saint John Paul II said in Denver in 1993, “Have no fear. The outcome of the battle for life is already decided.” Our work is to apply the already established victory to every facet of our society. Celebrating the Eucharist is the source and summit of such work.

**FROM FR. MARK SEIKER:**  
**2018 Pumpkin Festival** ... will be on **Sunday, October 14, 2018.** The **Pumpkin Festival Committee will be meeting on Sunday, August 18, 11:30am.** to discuss preparations for the Pumpkin Festival. We will have the Raffle Tickets ready to distribute in early September.

Please pray for good weather for the Pumpkin Festival. Ask the Lord to send us the weather that He knows we need and to get us ready to accept lovingly from His hands the weather that He sends us, and to work together as a Parish Family to build up the Kingdom of God.

**RCIA Classes** ... Fr. Mark Seiker will be leading an RCIA process (Inquiry class in the Faith) **beginning in Sept. 2018** until a few weeks after Easter (mid May 2019). Classes will usually be held on **Wednesdays in the Parish Hall from 7:00pm – 9:00pm.** These classes are open to Catholics and non-Catholics alike. For Catholics, it is a good opportunity to learn more about your faith. If you are interested call the Rectory or see Fr. Seiker. Begin praying and thinking about persons that you want to invite to study our faith with you. Our faith is to be treasured, preserved, and lived, but it is also to be shared ... share your faith with a friend by coming to these RCIA classes.

## Liturgical Minister

	Sat., Aug. 25, 5:00pm	Sun., Aug. 26, 10:00am
<b>Lector</b>	Mike Krondak	Justin Pieper
<b>Acolyte</b>	Duane Johnsen	Jerry Cooper
<b>Server</b>	William Krondak	Xavier Pieper
	Nicholas Krondak	Nicholas Niesen
<b>Music</b>	Matt & Ashley Perlinger	Buhrman/Niesen/Gregg
<b>Gifts</b>	Jim & Shirley Nisley	Bob & Tracy Ryland
<b>Ushers</b>	Steve Fear	Duane Johnsen
	Janet Fear	Heather Johnsen
<b>Rosary</b>		

## *Readings for the Week*

Monday:	Ez 24:15-24; Dt 32:18-21; Mt 19:16-22
Tuesday:	Ez 28:1-10; Dt 32:26-28, 30, 35cd-36ab; Mt 19:23-30
Wednesday:	Ez 34:1-11; Ps 23:1-6; Mt 20:1-16
Thursday:	Ez 36:23-28; Ps 51:12-15, 18-19; Mt 22:1-14
Friday:	Rv 21:9b-14; Ps 145:10-13, 17-18; Jn 1:45-51
Saturday:	Ez 43:1-7a; Ps 85:9ab, 10-14; Mt 23:1-12
Sunday:	Jos 24:1-2a, 15-17, 18b; Ps 34:2-3, 16-21; Eph 5:21-32 [2a, 25-32]; Jn 6:60-69

**Prayers for the sick:** Leona Clouatre, Sherry Kahl (mother of Yvette Troyer), Mary Lou Robles & Patricia Zamora (sisters of Toni Barron), Kelly Henry (Mitch Gregg's sister), Peggy Fleecs, Patti Caudillo, Renate Nordquist, Sharon Beckius, John Kahl, Mike & Kim Paul, Eileen Boltz, Jim Beckius.

**Prayers for the deceased:** Virginia Waechter (Peggy Orr's mother), Mary Jane Vitt (Chris Behm's mother), Bob "Junior" Barron (Toni Barron's brother), Bernadine Torres, Father Jim Novakowski, Margaret Schuckert, Martha Burbach, Jerry Kenny (Charles/Toni Barron's son-in-law), Bernadine Duryea (Ben Heskett's mom), Luke Ranck, Mary Portz, Phyllis Beckius.

**Birthdays:** 8/19 - Ava Lowrey. 8/22 - Derek Bantam, 8/23 - Gisele Barger, 8/25 - Alayna Niesen, 8/26 - Robin Bartlett, Alex Pineda.

**TREASURES FROM OUR TRADITION ...** Sometimes the heat of summer translates into unrest in a city's streets. In the summer of 1834, popular sentiment against the presence of the Ursuline nuns near Boston reached a boiling point. An influx of Irish laborers had an impact on the work force in the city, and a deep-seated resentment against Catholics fueled the fire. The nuns supported themselves with a school, and most of the young women students were drawn from patrician Protestant families. Nevertheless, rumors fed by the saga of an unhappy junior sister and a later episode of a senior sister fleeing the place increased tensions. The city's selectmen were given a tour by the disgruntled sister, who by then had returned, and found all things in good order. That didn't please the mob, and the mother superior didn't help matters when she said that the bishop had platoons of Irishmen at hand, twenty thousand strong, to do marauders harm. By August 11, the convent had been invaded, ransacked, and burned to the ground. The nuns fled to Maine and Canada. The diocese attempted to recover losses, but the commonwealth offered only ten thousand dollars, which was rejected. Years later, a legislative bill for the state to rebuild the convent and school was roundly defeated. Yet the enterprise of Catholic education had great resilience, and in 1946, more than a hundred years after the riots, the Ursulines returned to Boston to re-establish an academy that endures to the present day. —Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.

**THIS EUCHARISTIC FEAST ...** Some things about human nature don't change, even over the course of centuries. When we celebrate a holiday, we have a meal; when we celebrate a significant event, we have a feast. In today's first reading, Lady Wisdom is setting a feast, a sign of celebrating the covenant that Israel has with God. Israel's central remembrance of its saving Exodus covenant is the Passover meal. So it is natural – and not coincidental – that the Christian celebration of the new covenant sealed by the blood of Christ on the cross happens at a meal, our Eucharist, offered first by Jesus in the context of Passover remembrance. It is easy for us, sometimes, to forget the very long and rich religious and human origins of our eucharistic feasting on the bread and cup that are the Body and Blood of Jesus. Today, and for the next few Sundays that we hear the "Bread of Life" discourse from John, let us bring to mind the loving covenant that God makes with us, and be filled with great joy at this marvelous feast that we have come to attend! — Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co., Inc.

**THE GIFT OF GRACE ...** The gift of grace increases as the struggles increase. — St. Rose of Lima

**YOU ARE WHAT YOU EAT ...** The effect of receiving the body and blood of Christ is to change us into what we receive. — Pope Saint Leo the Great

**Pray for our Seminarians:** *at St. Gregory the Great Seminary; at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary; at Mount St. Mary Seminary. Pray for the Priests teaching in the Seminary, the Formation faculty and staff.*

**Pray for our Religious Sisters:** School Sisters of Christ the King; **1st Vows: Sister Mary Jacinta Gordon**, from St. John Lalande Parish, Blue Springs, MO; **Carmel of Jesus, Mary, & Joseph: Jr. Professed Novice: Sister Mary Laetitia of the Sacred Heart** from Minneapolis, MN.

## HOLY FATHER'S INTENTIONS ...

**(August) Universal: The treasure of Families** - That any far-reaching decisions of economists and politicians may protect the family as one of the treasures of humanity.



## One Priest's Answer to the Scandal

*Homily by Father Roger Landry given 2/3/2002 at the Parish Church of Espirito Santo, in Fall River, Massachusetts.*

The headlines this past week did not focus on the Patriots' march to the Super Bowl, or on who would QB, Drew or Tom, or even on the president's State of the Union address and his comment that there are many al-Qaida operatives in the U.S. like "ticking time-bombs." None of these was the top story. The headlines were captured by the very sad news that perhaps up to 70 priests in the Archdiocese of Boston have abused young people whom they were consecrated to serve.

It's a huge scandal, one that many people who have long disliked the Church because of one of her moral or doctrinal teachings are using as an issue to attack the Church as a whole, trying to imply that they were right all along.

Many people have come up to me to talk about it. Many others have wanted to, but I think out of respect and of not wanting to bring up what they thought might be bad news, have refrained, but it was obvious to me that it was on their mind. And so, today, I'd like to tackle the issue head-on. You have a right to it. We cannot pretend as if it didn't exist. And I'd like to discuss what our response should be as faithful Catholics to this terrible scandal.

The first thing we need to do is to understand it from the point of view of our faith in the Lord. Before he chose his first disciples, Jesus went up the mountain all night to pray. He had at the time many followers. He talked to his Father in prayer about whom he would choose to be his Twelve Apostles, the Twelve he would himself form intimately, the Twelve whom he would send out to preach the Good News in his name.

He gave them power to cast out demons. He gave them power to cure the sick. They watched him work countless miracles. They themselves in his name worked countless others.

Yet, despite all of that, one of them was a traitor. One who had followed the Lord, who had had his feet washed by the Lord, who had seen him walk on water, raise people from the dead, forgive sinners, betrayed the Lord. The Gospel tells us that he allowed Satan to enter into him and then he sold the Lord for 30 pieces of silver, handing him over by faking a gesture of love. "Judas," Jesus said to him in the garden of Gethsemane, "Would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" Jesus didn't choose Judas to betray him. He chose him to be like all the others. But Judas was always free, and he used his freedom to allow Satan to enter into him, and he ended up betraying God and getting him crucified and executed.

So right from the first Twelve that Jesus himself chose, one was a terrible traitor. Sometimes God's chosen ones betray him. That's a fact that we have to confront. It's a fact that the early Church confronted. If the scandal caused by Judas were all that the members of the early Church focused on, the Church would have been finished before it even started to grow. Instead, the Church recognized that you don't judge something by those who don't live it, but by those who do. Instead of focusing on the one who betrayed, they focused on the other Eleven, on account of whose work, preaching, miracles, love for Christ, we are here today....

The media almost never focus on the good "Eleven," the ones whom Jesus has chosen who remain faithful, who live lives of quiet holiness. But we, the Church, must keep the

terrible scandal that we've witnessed in its true and full perspective.

Scandal is unfortunately nothing new for the Church. There have been many times in the history of the Church when the Church was much worse off than it is now. The history of the Church is like a cosine curve, with ups and downs throughout the centuries. At each of the times when the Church hit its low point, God raised up tremendous saints to bring the Church back to its real mission. It's almost as if in those times of darkness, the Light of Christ shone ever more brightly. I'd like to focus a little on a couple of saints whom God raised up in these most difficult times, because their wisdom can really guide us during this difficult time.

What should our reaction be then? Two great saints who lived during difficult times can guide us in this our own difficult time.

Once, St. Francis de Sales was asked to address the situation of the scandal caused by some of his brother priests during the 1500s and 1600s. What he said is as important for us today as it was for his listeners then.

He stated, "Those who commit these types of scandals are guilty of the spiritual equivalent of murder," destroying other people's faith in God by their terrible example. But then he warned his listeners, "But I'm here among you to prevent something far worse for you. While those who give scandal are guilty of the spiritual equivalent of murder, those who take scandal - who allow scandals to destroy their faith - are guilty of spiritual suicide."

They're guilty, he said, of cutting off their life with Christ, abandoning the source of life in the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist. He went among the people in Switzerland trying to prevent their committing spiritual suicide on account of the scandals. I'm here to preach the same thing to you.

Another great saint can help us further. St. Francis of Assisi lived in the 1200s, which was a time of terribly immorality in central Italy. Priests were setting terrible example. Lay immorality was even worse. St. Francis himself while a young man even gave some scandal to others, by his carefree ways.

But eventually he was converted back to the Lord, founded the Franciscans, helped God rebuild his Church and became one of the great saints of all time. Once one of the brothers in the Franciscans asked him a question. The brother was very sensitive to scandals.

"Brother Francis," he said, "What would you do if you knew that the priest celebrating Mass had three concubines on the side?" Francis, without missing a beat, said slowly, "When it came time for holy Communion, I would go to receive the sacred Body of my Lord from the priest's anointed hands."

What was Francis getting at? He was getting at a tremendous truth of the faith and a tremendous gift of the Lord. No matter how sinful a priest is, provided that he has the intention to do what the Church does - at Mass, for example, to change bread and wine into Christ's body and blood, or in confession, no matter how sinful he is personally, to forgive the penitent's sins - Christ himself acts through that minister in the sacraments.

Whether Pope John Paul II celebrates the Mass or whether a priest on death row for a felony celebrates Mass, it is Christ who himself acts and gives us his own body and blood. So what Francis was saying in response to the question of his religious brother that he would receive the sacred Body of his Lord from the priest's anointed hands is that he was not going to let the wickedness or immorality of the priest lead him to commit spiritual suicide.

Christ can still work and does still work even through the most sinful priest. And thank God! If we were always dependent on the priest's personal holiness, we'd be in trouble.

And so, again, I ask, "What should the response of the Church be to these deeds?" There has been a lot of talk about that in the media. Does the Church have to do a better job in making sure no one with any predisposition toward pedophilia gets ordained? Absolutely. But that would not be enough.

Does the Church have to do a better job in handling cases when they are reported? The Church has changed its way of handling these cases, and today they're much better than they were in the 1980s, but they can always be perfected. But even that is not enough. Do we have to do more to support the victims of such abuse? Yes we do, both out of justice and out of love! But not even that is adequate.

Cardinal Law has gotten most of the deans of the medical schools in Boston to work on establishing a center for the prevention of child abuse, which is something that we should all support. But not even that is a sufficient response.

The only adequate response to this terrible scandal, the only fully Catholic response to this scandal - as St. Francis of Assisi recognized in the 1200s, and as countless other saints have recognized in every century - is holiness!

Every crisis that the Church faces, every crisis that the world faces, is a crisis of saints. Holiness is crucial, because it is the real face of the Church. There are always people - a priest meets them regularly, you probably know several of them - who use excuses for why they don't practice the faith, why they slowly commit spiritual suicide. It can be because a nun was mean to them when they were 9. Or because they don't understand the teaching of the Church on a particular issue - as if any of these reasons would truly justify their lack of practice of the faith, as if any of them would be able to convince their consciences not to do what they know they should.

There will doubtless be many people these days - and you will probably meet them - who will say, "Why should I practice the faith, why should I go to Church, since the Church can't be true if God's so-called chosen ones can do the types of things we've been reading about?" This scandal is a huge hanger on which some will try to hang their justification for not practicing the faith. That's why holiness is so important. They need to find in all of us a reason for faith, a reason for hope, a reason for responding with love to the love of the Lord. The beatitudes which we have in today's Gospel are a recipe for holiness. We all need to live them more.

Do priests have to become holier? They sure do. Do religious brothers and sisters have to become holier and give ever greater witness of God and heaven? Absolutely. But all people in the Church do, including lay people! We all have the vocation to be holy and this crisis is a wake-up call.

It's a tough time to be a priest today. It's a tough time to be a Catholic today. But it's also a great time to be a priest and a great time to be a Catholic. Jesus says in the beatitudes we heard today, "Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of slander against you falsely because of me. Be glad and rejoice, for your reward in heaven is great."

It's a great time to be a Christian, because this is a time in which God really needs us to show off his true face. In olden days in America, the Church was respected. Priests were respected. It's not so any more.

One of the greatest Catholic preachers in American history, Bishop Fulton J. Sheen, used to say that he preferred to live in times when the Church has suffered rather than thrived, when the Church had to struggle, when the Church had to go against the culture.

It was a time for real men and real women to stand up and be counted. "Even dead bodies can float downstream," he used to say, pointing that many people can coast when the Church is respected, "but it takes a real man, a real woman, to swim against the current." How true that is! It takes a real man and a real woman to stand up now and swim against the current that is flowing against the Church. It takes a real man and a real woman to recognize that when swimming against the flood of criticism, you're safest when you stay attached to the Rock on whom Christ built his Church. This is one of those times. It's a great time to be a Christian.

This is a time in which all of us need to focus ever more on holiness. We're called to be saints and how much our society here needs to see this beautiful, radiant face of the Church. You're part of the solution, a crucial part of the solution. And as you come forward today to receive from this priest's anointed hands the sacred Body of your Lord, ask him to fill you with a real desire for sanctity, a real desire to show off his true face.

One of the reasons why I'm here in front of you as a priest today is because while I younger, I was under impressed with some of the priests I knew. I would watch them celebrate Mass and almost without any reverence whatsoever drop the Body of the Lord onto the paten, as if they were handling something with little value rather than the Creator and Savior of all, rather than my creator and savior.

I remember saying to the Lord, reiterating my desire to be a priest, "Lord, please let me become a priest, so I can treat you like you deserve!" It gave me a great fire to serve the Lord. Maybe this scandal can allow you to do the same thing.

This scandal can be something that can lead you down to the path of spiritual suicide, or it can be something that can inspire you to say, finally, "I want to become a saint, so that the Church can show your true face, O Lord, to the world, so that others might find in you the love and the salvation that I have found."

Jesus is with us, as he promised, until the end of time. He's still in the bark of Peter and will prevent its capsizing. Just as out of Judas' betrayal, he achieved the greatest victory in world history, our salvation through his passion, death and resurrection, so out of this he may bring, and wants to bring, a new rebirth of holiness, a new Acts of the Apostles for the 21st century, with each of us - and that includes you - playing a starring role.

Now's the time for real men and women of the Church to stand up. Now's the time for saints. How do you respond?